

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 911

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to commend Susan R. Cooper for her honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as Commissioner of Health.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of the General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Susan R. Cooper is one such laudable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2007, Susan R. Cooper etched her name in the annals of Tennessee history when she became the first nurse to be appointed Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Health by Governor Phil Bredesen; and

WHEREAS, on January 15, 2011, Susan R. Cooper was reappointed Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Health by Governor Bill Haslam; and

WHEREAS, Susan R. Cooper remained in that position through September 18, 2011, at which time she stepped aside to move to a new chapter in her career, having fulfilled her commitment to Governor Haslam to assist with the new Administration's transition and the first legislative session; and

WHEREAS, in addressing Susan R. Cooper's work as Commissioner of Health, Governor Haslam said, "I am thankful Susan served the people of Tennessee as part of this administration. She is a passionate advocate for a healthier Tennessee, and we will continue to focus on initiatives that encourage our citizens to make positive choices to exercise and eat well. I have enjoyed working with her and wish her the best."; and

WHEREAS, Governor Bredesen on a number of occasions voiced similar praise for Susan R. Cooper's work during her service in his administration both in developing the Health Care Safety Net and as Commissioner of Health; and

WHEREAS, throughout her exemplary tenure, Commissioner Cooper distinguished herself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to her state; and

WHEREAS, with visionary leadership and unparalleled commitment to excellence, Commissioner Cooper has ushered in a host of positive changes and established a wide variety of policies, programs, and partnerships designed to protect, promote and improve the health of all Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, a former Assistant Dean for Practice at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, Susan R. Cooper came to work for the great state of Tennessee in 2005 as a special health policy advisor charged with the development of the Health Care Safety Net and innovative programs to address the threats of Type II diabetes facing the residents of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure as Commissioner, the health of the great state of Tennessee has improved remarkably, receiving its highest national health ranking in history; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Cooper was instrumental in securing the passage and implementation of the "Non-Smoker Protection Act"; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Cooper has presented nationally and internationally on Tennessee's use of innovative strategies and initiatives in prevention, emergency preparedness, and community resilience; and

WHEREAS, she is highly regarded as a national thought leader in the field of public health; and

WHEREAS, she is frequently requested to speak on timely and relevant topics, including "Staying Ahead of the Curve: Safeguarding the Public's Health" at the Symposium on Rethinking Health Risks and Equity in Taipei, Taiwan in 2011, "Exploring School Based

Strategies for Increasing Physical Activity” at the 2011 Childhood Obesity Summit in Washington, D.C., “The Tennessee Experience” during the 2010 America’s Health Rankings Conference in our Nation’s Capitol, and “Private and Public Sector Integration: Preparing and Responding to Public Health Emergencies” at the Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Catastrophic Events; and

WHEREAS, Susan R. Cooper has provided expert testimony to the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and the United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on the topics of “A Nation Prepared: Strengthening the Medical and Public Health Preparedness and Response” in 2011, “Global Warming Impacts, Including Public Health” in 2012; and on Examining the Human Health Impacts of Climate Change in 2007; and

WHEREAS, a highly influential figure in her field, Commissioner Cooper rendered sterling service as a member of the Board of Directors’ Executive Committee and Chair of the Prevention Committee for the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, and member of the National Commission on Prevention Priorities; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Commissioner Cooper has garnered a host of awards throughout her distinguished career in recognition of her contributions to the betterment of the health and conditions of those who she served. She is the recipient of the Presidential Meritorious Service Award, the John S. Derryberry, M.D. Award for Distinguished Service, the Leading Forward Award, the William V. Corr Award, the Rising Star Award, the State Award of Excellence, the 2007 Advocate of the Year Award, and the Health Reform Advocate Award, and she was named a 100 Leaders in 100 Years Honoree, a 2008 Healthcare Hero, one of Ten Women to Watch in Healthcare, a Senior Fellow at the Penn Macy Institute to Advance Academic Nursing Practice, and was recently inducted as a Fellow into the prestigious American Academy of Nursing; and

WHEREAS, her many accomplishments aside, Commissioner Cooper is fortunate to share both love and companionship with her three grown children; daughters, Elizabeth McFadden (Brad), Eileen Conner (Matt), and son, Kerry, and her four beloved grandchildren, Julianna, Carter, Rob, and Collin; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Susan R. Cooper is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the “Volunteer State”, she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Susan R. Cooper for her honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee as Commissioner of Health and salute her unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.